

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 004751

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: PDAS CHENEY MEETS WITH MFA'S A/S-EQUIVALENT
JEAN-FRANCOIS THIBAUT, FOCUSES ON LEBANON

REF: BUCK-FITZPATRICK 6/28 E-MAIL

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, FOR REAS
ONS 1.4 B/D

1. (C) Summary: NEA PDAS Liz Cheney met July 1 with Jean-Francois Thibault, the MFA's A/S-equivalent for the Middle East, and focused on Lebanon while also briefly touching on Iran. The two agreed that July 25 and 26 should be the next dates for a Core Group meeting in Beirut. They also agreed that, following the formation of a new government, the US, UK and French Ambassadors should deliver a joint demarche to demonstrate Core Group and international community unity. In addition, the French explained the apparent conflict between the view in Paris and the view in the French Mission to the UN on the issue of mentioning Hezbollah and UNSCR 1559 in a Security Council discussion of cross-border violence in the Shebaa farms area. They also informed the PDAS that, despite their earlier agreement to send a joint military assessment team to Beirut, the French would be moving ahead alone on this in August. End summary.

2. (U) French participants in the meeting, which took place at the French Foreign Ministry, included Thibault, PDAS-equivalent Christian Jouret, DAS-equivalent for UN issues Jean Pierre Lacroix and Remy Bonallegue, Lebanon/Syria desk officer. PDAS Cheney was accompanied by Polmincouns Josiah Rosenblatt and Poloff Peter Kujawinski (note taker).

IRAN

3. (C) Thibault initially raised Iran, and said the the GOF was "quite surprised" about incoming Iranian President Ahmadinejad's reported role in the U.S. Embassy hostage-taking. He added that the EU-3 still planned on transmitting to the Iranians a set of proposals by the end of July, as they had committed to do. Because they were unsure of Ahmadinejad's position regarding negotiations with the EU-3, they saw transmitting the proposals by the end of July as a good way to lay down an EU marker before Ahmadinejad's August 3 inauguration. (Comment: Readouts from other capitals on the latest EU-3/Iran round indicate that the EU-3 may prefer to present its proposals only after the August 3 inauguration of Ahmadinejad (reftel). Thibault's information may be accurate, but it should be borne in mind that he is not in the inner circle of Iran negotiations. End comment.)

LEBANON/CORE GROUP

4. (C) Cheney and Thibault decided upon July 25 and 26 as dates for the next Core Group meeting in Beirut. They discussed who should be invited, and whether or not it was a good idea to invite Russia. Thibault said Russia would not be happy if it wasn't invited, but that not inviting them would make it easier not to invite Italy. He noted, and Cheney agreed, that the Russians had not been helpful at the June 13 meetings in Paris. He added that France was not opposed in a general sense to Italy's inclusion, especially given its commercial ties with Lebanon, but that the GOF saw the Core Group as pragmatic, reactive and small. If Italy came in, said Thibault, Germany would want to join as well. Cheney said the USG would like to keep the Core Group small and would come back to Thibault with U.S. views on Russia and Italy.

5. (C) Cheney suggested that when the new Lebanese government is formed, the US, UK and French Ambassadors should make a joint demarche outlining the Core Group and international community's goals for Lebanon's transition. Although initially Thibault preferred that any decision on joint demarches be made by the Ambassadors in-country, he eventually agreed upon issuing instructions from capitals requesting a joint demarche. Beyond instructing the Ambassadors to make a joint demarche, Cheney and Thibault agreed that other details, including proposing a structure for the Beirut meeting, should be discussed by the Ambassadors in Beirut with recommendations coming to the capitals.

HEZBOLLAH/SHEBAA FARMS/ARMS EMBARGO/SYRIA

6. (C) Cheney noted that the GOF's June 30 press statement on Hezbollah's involvement in a recent Blue Line incident specifically cited Hezbollah and UNSCR 1559, despite the fact that the same day, France's UN mission resisted citing UNSCR

1559 in discussions on a Security Council reaction (see GOF press statement at para 8). Thibault and Lacroix argued that since France was UNSC President at the time, it was obligated to seek consensus as quickly as possible, and it "knew" that Algeria and perhaps other members would refuse to include a reference to UNSCR 1559. They pointed to their June 30 press statement as the definitive GOF position. Thibault said the statement was not controversial, given that it was based on facts. Thibault added that the recent violence in the Shebaa farms area had caused concern in the GOF. The French believe, said Thibault, that Hezbollah was very nervous and that in this situation, it might be tempted to undertake further actions. In the current context, the GOF believed that a potential UNSC resolution regarding an arms embargo on Hezbollah would be "something dangerous" that would "put fuel on the fire." He said Terje Roed-Larsen must deliver the right message to the Syrians, and also, Larsen was the right channel to deliver the message. Cheney said that Syria must recognize that talking to Larsen is not enough, and it must act. Regarding a possible UNSC arms embargo against Hezbollah, Cheney said the U.S. would consult with the new Lebanese government. If it believed that such an embargo resolution (either "negative" or "positive") would help it extend control over the entirety of its territory, this would influence the U.S. position. Thibault reiterated that an embargo aimed at Hezbollah would have very sensitive implications, and that great caution was required. France's first priority, said Thibault, was stability in Lebanon.

LEBANON/JOINT MILITARY ASSESSMENT

17. (C) Following discussion of a potential arms embargo on Hezbollah and the needs of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), Thibault mentioned that the French MOD planned a military needs assessment/audit to Lebanon in August, although no plans or dates had been definitively fixed. When Cheney asked if the GOF had given up on their commitment to a joint U.S., French, UK assessment - as agreed on June 13 - Thibault was evasive. He emphasized that their military attaches in Beirut should coordinate closely.

18. (U) Informal translation of the French Foreign Ministry press statement, issued on June 30:

"We condemn the action which provoked serious confrontation in the Sheba farms sector. We mourn for the victims.

In this period of a crucial transition regarding Lebanon's future, we call on all parties, in particular Hezbollah, not to cede to the temptation of violence and to demonstrate self-restraint and responsibility.

Furthermore, we underscore our desire that all pertinent resolutions on Lebanon be implemented, including UNSC Resolution 1559 which anticipates that Lebanese authorities will exercise control over the entirety of their territory."

19. (U) This cable was cleared by PDAS Liz Cheney.
STAPLETON